WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS
FOR SOUTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN COUNTIES
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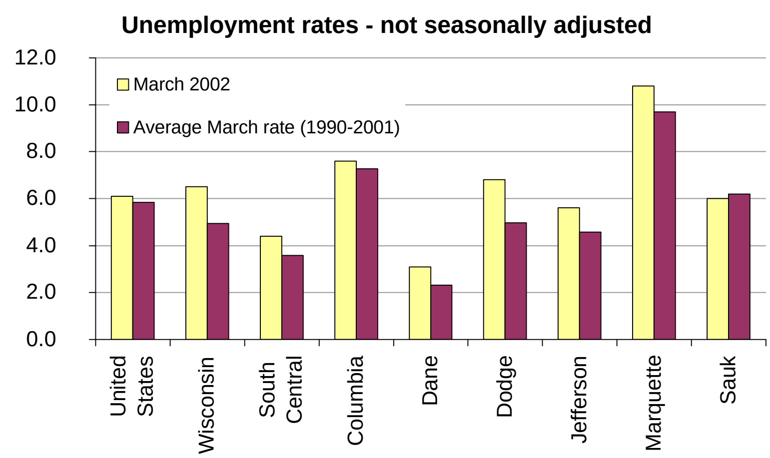
State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

Unemployment rates fall more than usual and remain higher than usual

In March, the national unemployment rate remained steady at its February level of 6.1 percent. Meanwhile, from February to March, Wisconsin's unemployment rate dropped from 6.7 percent to 6.5 percent, the South Central region's rate declined from 4.5 percent to 4.4 percent and Dane County's rate held at 3.1 percent. Averaging the unemployment rates for each March from 1990 to 2001, the average rate was lower than the current rate in every South Central County except Sauk. The nation, the state, and all the other South Central counties remained at least slightly above their average rates of unemployment.



Many reports have suggested signs of healthy recovery from a relatively mild recession. The graph on the next page attempts to discern seasonal trends from cyclical trends. It shows that four of South Central Wisconsin's six counties saw faster-than-normal declines in their unemployment rates. Only two did not, and they are anomalous in their own ways. Dane County's 3.1 percent unemployment rate would look more like boom than recession in most places. Sauk County's rate increased at a time when it usually decreases, but it was the only county in the region whose current March rate was lower than the average of the March rates in 1990-2001. Every other county in the region saw a decline in the number of unemployed persons while Sauk saw an increase. Sauk's swelling labor force reflects a regular pattern of people entering the labor market for seasonal jobs.

Dane County was the only one in the region to lose a large number manufacturing jobs in March. Generally, manufacturing employment peaks around August and bottoms out around January or February, so job growth would be more typical of the seasonal pattern. South Central Wisconsin has not yet seen signs of a robust comeback in manufacturing. Dodge County's manufacturing employment levels remained lower than they have been in any March since 1995, and the sector's job growth is mild compared to its job losses over the last two winters. Recently, much manufacturing growth elsewhere in the country has been related to defense spending, which does

Data for 2001 have been revised. Calculations referencing 2001 data are based on revised data.

Labor force estimates - not seasonally adjusted

March 2002 Estimates	Wisconsin	South Central WI	Madison MSA	Columbia County	Dodge County	Jefferson County	Marquette County	Sauk County
				March 2002				
Civilian Labor Force*	3,049,800	440,800	276,200	28,300	48,300	44,100	7,500	36,500
Employed	2,851,100	421,400	267,700	26,100	45,000	41,600	6,700	34,300
Unemployed	198,700	19,400	8,600	2,100	3,300	2,500	810	2,200
Unemployment Rate (%)	6.5	4.4	3.1	7.6	6.8	5.6	10.8	6.0
				Change From February 2002				
Civilian Labor Force*	-1,650	630	100	120	10	100	10	290
Employed	4,300	1,090	150	260	150	250	70	230
Unemployed	-5,900	-460	-50	-130	-140	-150	-50	60
Unemployment Rate (%)	-0.2	-0.1	0.0	-0.5	-0.3	-0.3	-0.7	0.1
				Change From March 2001				
Civilian Labor Force*	89,000	11,900	5,500	1,370	1,280	1,410	290	2,000
Employed	45,900	7,700	3,400	1,020	590	870	260	1,570
Unemployed	43,100	4,200	2,100	360	690	540	30	470
Unemployment Rate (%)	1.2	0.9	0.7	1.0	1.3	1.1	0.0	1.0

* Includes people residing in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary. Numbers 2,000 and greater are rounded to nearest 100. Numbers under 2,000 are rounded to nearest 10. Sub-units may not add to totals due to rounding. Calculations are based on unrounded numbers, results are rounded

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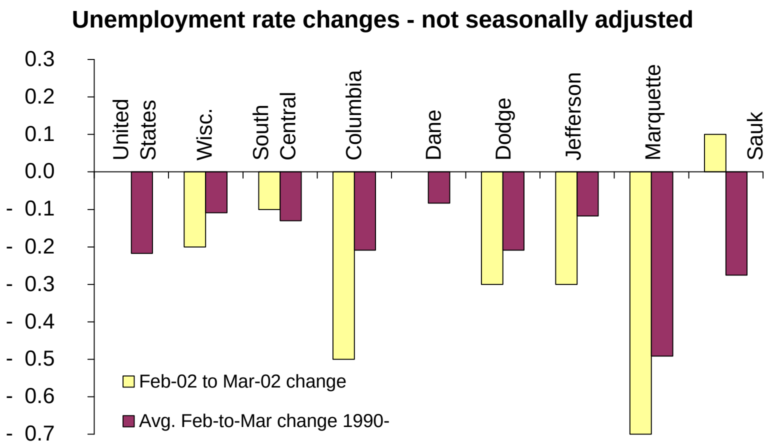
not generally go to Wisconsin manufacturers. Lingering uncertainties about petroleum supplies and prices could hamper energy-intensive manufacturers.

Increases in retail trade employment and construction employment are very close to seasonal norms. Restructuring at K-Mart may soften the retail employment outlook a bit in the short term, but other retailers are likely to fill the void over time. Many commentators had predicted that unusually mild weather (which allowed more building during the winter months) would lead to less pent-up demand for construction and therefore a smaller-than-usual boost in construction employment in the spring. So far, regular seasonal trends have prevailed.



To the extent that retail and construction are indicators of general economic health, they bode moderately well for this year. Consumers appear to have enough confidence to support retailers and residential construction. On the other hand, this recession was lead by declines in business investment and it saw little if any slowing in consumer spending. It would be more reassuring see some strong indication that construction increases were correlated with growth in business investment.

Data for 2001 have been revised. Calculations referencing 2001 data are based on revised data.

Payroll employment estimates - not seasonally adjusted

March 2002 Estimates	Wisconsin	South Central WI	Madison MSA	Columbia County	Dodge County	Jefferson County	Marquette County	Sauk County
				March 2002				
Total jobs, all industries**	2,774,400	423,000	290,800	21,200	34,500	37,200	3,600	35,700
Construction & Mining	108,900	16,600	10,900	960	1,880	1,010	140	1,740
Manufacturing	563,200	66,900	29,200	5,600	12,000	11,700	1,200	7,200
Transport & Public Util.	130,000	14,900	10,400	590	1,330	1,480	80	1,000
Wholesale Trade	135,700	17,000	12,100	730	1,050	1,300	90	1,760
Retail Trade	490,100	73,400	49,000	4,000	5,000	7,200	660	7,600
Finance, Ins. Real Estate	151,300	26,800	23,600	420	790	810	110	1,130
Services	770,300	112,200	80,200	4,900	7,100	9,500	560	9,900
Government	424,800	95,100	75,500	3,900	5,300	4,300	740	5,300
				Change From February 2002				
Total jobs, all industries**	14,600	2,700	1,500	260	230	370	50	340
Construction & Mining	4,200	590	340	50	40	60	20	70
Manufacturing	-1,470	-170	-240	50	60	-20	0	-20
Transport & Public Util.	670	120	80	0	10	0	0	20
Wholesale Trade	350	30	10	10	0	10	0	0
Retail Trade	4,100	660	190	90	60	130	10	180
Finance, Ins. Real Estate	500	110	100	10	0	10	0	0
Services	3,500	840	480	50	80	120	10	80
Government	2,700	570	540	10	-30	60	0	-10
				Change From March 2001				
Total jobs, all industries**	-10,100	9,500	7,000	1,080	-580	-370	20	2,300
Construction & Mining	-5,000	-1,810	-1,960	40	70	-50	0	90
Manufacturing	-50,800	-3,600	-1,480	360	-1,310	-1,350	50	100
Transport & Public Util.	60	380	570	-90	90	-150	-20	-20
Wholesale Trade	-1,680	-700	-610	-40	-40	-100	20	80
Retail Trade	7,400	2,500	1,530	20	50	240	-20	670
Finance, Ins. Real Estate	4,800	1,700	1,600	0	-20	30	0	90
Services	22,500	8,900	6,100	550	230	860	60	1,160
Government	12,700	2,200	1,330	240	350	150	-70	160

ıcludes employment with employers located in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary. Numbers 2,000 and greater are rounded to nearest 1
Numbers under 2,000 are rounded to nearest 10. Sub-units may not add to totals due to rounding. Calculations are based on unrounded numbers, results are rounded.

Look for the most current Labor Market Information at: www.dwd.state.wi.us/lmi.
Direct questions and comments to: **Dan Barroilhet, Labor Market Economist**
Dane County Job Center, 1819 Aberg Avenue, Suite C, Madison, WI 53704
Telephone: (608) 242-4885; Email: BarroDa@dwd.state.wi.us